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# NEWS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release:**  
Tuesday, August 14, 2001

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## COUNTY WARNS OF RABID ANIMALS

Monroe County health officials today announced that a fox that viciously attacked several people in the town of Perinton late last week and two stray cats, one found in Greece and the other in Perinton, were rabid. In addition, the Health Department has received, over the past month, more than 200 reports of bats entering people's homes through openings.

The rabid fox severely bit two people, one of whom was swimming in a pool at the time, and two others were exposed to its saliva on August 9, 2001 in the Knapps Circle/Wheatfield Circle area, shortly after it confronted a construction worker. Four people are receiving treatment; a series of five shots administered over a 28-day period to prevent contracting rabies. The fox was killed and submitted for testing.

A total of five people are being treated either because of a bite or a secondary saliva exposure from the cats and as a result of the bat reports and possible exposure to rabies, 30 people are undergoing rabies preventive treatment.

Typically, young bats leave their roost in August. They often enter homes through very small openings or through broken windows, screens, or rotted eaves. Treatment is often recommended for people that awaken and find a bat in their bedroom, because it is not known if the bat may have bitten or otherwise exposed the person to rabies while the person was sleeping.

Health officials stress the importance of capturing bats found in the home, for subsequent rabies testing. Animal Control officers in some municipalities may provide assistance in capturing bats; if not, call a professional pest control company. The vast majority of bats, however, are not rabid.

Rabies is a viral infection that is fatal once symptoms develop. Health officials strongly discourage feeding or touching wild or stray animals. If exposed to a suspect animal, wash the affected area with soap and water and immediately seek medical attention. Aggressive or menacing animals outdoors should be reported to 911.

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